

VZCZCXRO9092
PP RUEHBZ RUEH DU RUEHGI RUEHJO RUEHMR RUEHRN
DE RUEH KI #0121 0351638
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 041638Z FEB 08
FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7471
INFO RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID 0012
RUEHXR/RWANDA COLLECTIVE
RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE
RUZEJAA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK

UNCLAS KINSHASA 000121

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [EAID](#) [KDEM](#) [SOCI](#) [CG](#) [SP](#)

SUBJECT: Spanish Foreign Minister visits Kinshasa

¶1. Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos signed a bilateral cooperation agreement with the DRC January 28 during a two-day visit to Kinshasa. He also pledged 20 million euros in aid for 2008 to help improve basic social services and to strengthen democratic institutions.

¶2. Moratinos met January 28 with President Kabila, Prime Minister Gizenga, and Foreign Minister Mbusa. According to press reports, he expressed Spain's desire to strengthen relations between the two countries politically, economically and socially.

¶3. Foreign Minister Mbusa expressed the GDRC's regret to Moratinos that an artillery shell hit the Spanish Embassy during fighting between forces loyal to President Kabila and to Jean-Pierre Bemba last March 22. Mbusa assured him that it was an accident and not action against Spain. He promised to launch an investigation and to punish those responsible.

¶4. Note: Press reports indicated that the aid pledge would be 20 million euros annually and that the Congolese government would decide how the money was to be spent. In fact, the Spanish Embassy's deputy chief of mission told us February 4 that her government had pledged 20 million euros for 2008 only and that the money would be distributed through NGOs and the UNDP. End note.

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